

### **Remarks**

Claims 1-33 and 37-41 are pending. Claims 1-33 and 37-41 are rejected.

Claims 1, 12, 16, 20, 27 and 33 have been amended. Support for these amendments may be found, for example, on page 2, lines 22-28, page 11, lines 4-12 and page 14, lines 25-29 of the Application.

Claims 1-11 and 20-32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 5,315,504 (Lemble), U.S. Pat. No. 5,031,214 (Dziewit) and U.S. Pat. No. 6,434,580 (Takano). Claims 16-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lemble, Dziewit and Takano. Claims 12-15, 33, 37-39 and 41 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lemble and Takano.

With regard to claim 1, Takano does not appear to teach requesting, from a docketing system configured to maintain status information for the disclosure and track due dates for any patent applications originating from the disclosure, a next available docket identification number for the permanently locked disclosure. The Examiner cites the following passages of Takano:

The reference number of the invention report here is a number assigned in accordance with a prescribed rule (e.g. a serial number assigned in the temporal order of the reporting of inventions). This number, instead of being entered by the inventor, may as well be automatically picked up by the invention report information entry means 102 and automatically piece on the invention report information input screen.

Takano, col. 7, ll. 3-10.

Another specific example of registration processing at step A8 is conceivable, in which a piece of invention report information and draft data are put together and stored into a single directory (file), and this file, to which a directory (file) name enabling both the inventor using the client computer 100 and the

patent-application-filing persons using the client computer 200 to identify the draft data, e.g. the reference number contained in the pertinent piece of invention report information, is assigned, is registered in the specification file 303.

Takano, col. 7, l. 64 - col. 8, l. 6.

Takano's invention report information means 102, however, does not appear to be the docketing system of claim 1. That is, Takano's invention report information means does not appear to be configured to maintain status information for the disclosure and track due dates for any patent applications originating from the disclosure. Moreover, Takano does not appear to request a next available docket identification from its invention report information means 102. Rather, Takano provides that "[t]his number, instead of being entered by the inventor, may as well be automatically picked up by the invention report information entry means 102 . . . ." Takano, col. 7, ll. 6-8 (emphasis added).

With regard to claim 1, the Examiner asserts that "it would have been obvious . . . to implement the invention of Lemble [with] Takano for the purpose of . . . obtaining and assigning a next available docket number to the document would provide a convenient way to identify the document as suggested by Takano . . . ." Office Action, September 17, 2008, p. 6. Lemble, however, already provides a way to identify its documents: "As APPFUTU, it contains document identification, function identification, approver type and mandatory indicator. It contains also the previous approver's name, one line personal comments from the previous approver, the date and time of previous action." Lemble, col. 10, ll. 7-38 (emphasis added). The Examiner's proposed combination of Lemble and Takano would appear to unnecessarily add redundancy and complexity to the system of Lemble (without any additional functionality). One of ordinary skill would not have had such reason to combine Lemble and Takano. The Examiner has not established a *prima facie* case of obviousness.

Claims 12, 16, 20, 27 and 33 are patentable for the reasons claim 1 is patentable.

The dependent claims are patentable because they depend from one of the independent claims.

Applicants' Attorney submits that the claims are in a condition for allowance. Applicants' Attorney respectfully requests a notice to that effect. Applicants' Attorney also invites a telephone conference if the Examiner believes that it will advance the prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,  
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